

# **Exhibit A**



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**SECTION:** Domestic News

**LENGTH:** 382 words

**HEADLINE:** Federal charges against Islamic charity dismissed in Oregon but investigation continues

**DATELINE:** PORTLAND, Ore.

**BODY:**

A federal judge has dismissed criminal charges against the U.S. branch of a defunct Islamic charity that was accused of helping al-Qaida, but prosecutors said new charges are possible.

The Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation Inc. branch in Ashland was indicted last February on two tax charges for allegedly helping to launder \$150,000 in donations five years ago to help al-Qaida fighters in Chechnya.

Federal prosecutors had asked last month that the charges be dropped, saying the case would be a waste of time because all that remains of the organization is its corporate shell.

However, the two men who ran the Ashland branch are still considered international fugitives.

At a hearing Thursday in Eugene, Marc Blackman, the attorney representing the Al-Haramain branch, asked U.S. Magistrate Thomas Coffin to reject the government's motion to dismiss the charges.

He argued that the case should either proceed to trial with the current indictment or be dismissed with prejudice, which would prevent the government from reviving it.

However, Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Cardani countered that the Al-Haramain investigation continues and involves "very serious charges." He did not give any details about those charges.

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The foundation was based in Saudi Arabia until the Saudi government ordered it dissolved in a crackdown on terrorist financing following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. The United States and other countries said it was suspected of funding the al-Qaida terror network led by Osama bin Laden.

The indictment against the foundation also charged Pete Seda and a Saudi named Soliman Al-Buthe with tax crimes involving the \$150,000 in donations.

Seda, an Ashland tree trimmer also known as Perouz Sedaghaty, established the Oregon charity in 1997 with support from the Saudi operation. The charity operated a prayer house and distributed Islamic literature to prisoners.

The indictment alleged that the two men had a bank convert money from an Egyptian donor into traveler's checks and a cashier's check that Al-Buthe took back to Saudi Arabia without reporting it, as required by federal law. Seda is accused of trying to hide the transaction from the Internal Revenue Service by claiming the money helped pay for a mosque in Missouri.

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